1629

Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

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"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."

JOHN HAY.

Problems of Anarchism.

PROPERTY.

5.— *Socialists and the Social Organism.*

The enlightened modern opponents of private property not only allege that they can demonstrate its abolition to be the certain outcome of evolution,— economic, industrial, moral, and historic, — but also claim that this end is being furthered by the vast and ever growing productions of modern legislators, and that it is the ultimate goal of Democracy. With this purpose in view they exploit the theory of the social organism, accepting it with as little discrimination as they have displayed in adopting general evolutionary teaching on which to construct their pleasant theories of hopeful delusions. Society is an organism, they say; therefore the perfect development of each individual is not necessarily the highest cultivation of his own personality, but the filling of his humble function in the great social machine. Hence the coördination of functions through government regulation is a progressive and beneficent step in the evolution of the organism, society. The enlargement of the power of authority and the function of the State is hailed with joy and trumpeted in notes of evolution by the champions of the new social order to be erected on the ruins of individual property.

So we find Socialists and other writers of this type devoting their literary talents to exemplify and eulogize the growth of laws for the regulation of industry and the limitation of private property; pointing with unbounded admiration to the State and governmental direction and gradual absorption of multitudinous enterprises of general utility,—all in the name and for the imaginary welfare of the community. Numerous prominent examples could be given to show the delight with which such writers hail every manifestation of paternalism. To cite one of the ablest will at present, however, suffice. Sidney Webb, the Socialist-Economist, writing on the "Historic Basis of Socialism" in the essays before referred to, draws a glowing picture of the rapid growth in recent times of governmental inspection, regulation, and organization of labor, showing the extension of authoritative activity into a bewildering variety of fields; from letter-carrying at a low charge to the gratuitous provision of novel reading, medicine, and midwifery; from the maintenance of penitentiaries, art galleries, slaughter houses, and courts of justice to the licensing and inspection of dancing rooms, dogs, lawyers, and brothels. The citizen, we are boastingly informed, is now furnished, willy-nilly, with free schooling, *gratis* weather predictions, and the putrefaction of compulsory vaccination without cost. Selah!

Accepting the view of the social organism as formulated by philosophic evolution, it is unhesitatingly assumed that the above line of development indicates a healthy growth, which will gradually eliminate both individual property and enterprise and thereby establish the millennium of social perfection. Mr. Webb tells us that "it still rests with the individual to resist or promote the social evolution, consciously or unconsciously, according to his character and information. *The importance of complete consciousness of the social tendencies of the age* lies in the fact that its existence and comprehensiveness often determine the expediency of our particular action; *we move with less resistance with the stream than against it.*" (Fabian Essays, p. 50.)

I have italicized the words in the quotation which seem to me to unfold the cardinal error at the bottom of his whole social philosophy. Taken along with the assumption already made clear that "the social tendencies of the age" are in the line of unlimited governmental extension, it displays commendable worldly wisdom on Mr. Webb's part to become a State Socialist and "move with the stream." But his loose method of reasoning really begs the whole question. If we treat society as an organism, we must first decide wherein healthy growth consists; we must determine how far the analogy with the individual organism holds good, and make clear the distinctions, if any exist, and, above all, we must make sure that the "tendencies" beloved of Mr. Webb are in the true sense progressive, and not organically retrogressive, before we fling ourselves into the line of least resistance to float only with the stream.

The neglect of these precautions, essential in a scientific treatment of social economics, has landed this school of reformers in a maze of contradictions, absurdities, and hopeless confusion, from which they are by no means likely to extricate themselves.

The Fabian Socialists profess to be diametrically opposed to the sociological views of Herbert Spencer, while at the same time borrowing from him whatever substratum of truth there is in their conception of the social organism. In the "Moral Basis of Socialism" we find nothing but a transposed and imperfect version of the evolutional theory of ethics as worked out by Spencer in his Synthetic Philosophy. So also we have Sidney Webb declaring "that a society is something more than an aggregate of so many individual units, — that it possesses existence distinguishable from those of any of its components. . . . The community must necessarily aim, consciously or not, at its continuance as a community: its life transcends that of any of its members; and the interests of the individual must often clash with those of the whole. . . . Without the continuance and sound health of the social organism no man can now live or thrive; and its persistence is accordingly his paramount end." (Fabian Essays, pp. 56, 57.)

All of which, except the final clause, is manifestly Spencerian. But, to show how little is really comprehended of the doctrine he attempts to exploit, I shall give one more quotation before proceeding to demonstrate the erroneous nature of the Fabian conception of the social organism. After giving examples of the necessity of certain qualities proper to the military type of society, which he evidently makes no attempt to distinguish from the industrial type, though his ideal society belongs exclusively to the latter, he informs us that "we must take even more care to improve the social organism, of which we form part, than to perfect our own individual development. Or, rather, the *perfect and fitting development of each individual is not necessarily the utmost and highest cultivation of his own personality*, but the filling, in the best possible way, of his humble function in the great social machine. We must abandon the self-conceit of imagining that we are independent units, and bend our jealous minds, absorbed in their own cultivation, to this subjection to the higher end, the common weal." (P. 58, *ibid.*)

The italicized portion, together with the last sentence, furnish unmistakable evidence that the author never reached the true and scientific conception of the social organism. The above is utterly at variance with any sound theory of organic growth and development, even without noting the fundamental distinction between the hypothetical social organism and the actual organization of the living animal. In consideration of the intelligence and erudition of its propounder, I feel not a little diffident in characterizing it as it deserves. The argument is fitly crowned with the ultimatum that liberty must be subordinated to equality, that the latter in social science is more important than the former. (See p. 59, *ibid.*) A conclusion as impotent as it is reactionary.

One of the first principles of biological science is that organic evolution consists of a differentiation of functions. The lowest forms of life are almost homogeneous, there is no separation of parts for the purpose of life-sustaining acts. Complexity denotes advancement. When the organism evolves heart, lungs, brain, and so forth, it attains a higher form of life. And the highest of all manifestations of sentient existence yet evolved, a civilized man, shows the greatest specialization, the most complete separation of the functions which combine their work in the life of the perfect organism. Mark: the development of a living organism is characterized by the separation of each part, by its specialization for the performance of certain functions, each organ doing its own work and in the healthy state confining itself solely to the work it is fitted to perform. The greater the degree to which this physiological division of labor has attained, the more perfect is the animal. True, this implies a combination, which, however, arises naturally, without artificial or conscious arrangement; and life was of a lower form before differentiation and specialization set in; it is the separation and consequent heterogeneity, in distinction to the combined homogeneity, that denotes progress.

What is biologically true of individual life in this respect is observed to hold good in the life of society. Not only is the sociological differentiation a measure of human development, but it is equally so in all other gregarious creatures. Yet we are asked to believe that a process the reverse of this, the return from differentiated functions exercised by highly specialized parts of the social organism, individuals and groups spontaneously combined, to the homogeneous structure in which all social, economic, and regulative functions converge toward one point, collective ownership, is the certain tendency of social evolution: we are to accept this phase of a transitory stage as the true goal and highest aim of civilized society. Moreover, in so far as such a tendency does exist, it is quite possible to furnish a rational and satisfatory explanation of its import and origin without recourse to the system adopted by Mr. Webb. Believing, as he does, that collectivism is the way toward which social evolution tends, he is quite consistent in working to hasten such a consummation. But when he endeavors to bolster up his conception with principles culled from evolutional data and Spencerian philosophy, the resulting inconsistency becomes grotesque.

We have seen how the common weal is set up to be the paramount end of individual action, and now it is required of each to subordinate his interests and his conduct to society. Now, this line of argument is possible only by ignoring the vital distinction between the social and individual organism. As Spencer says: "Society exists for the benefit of its members, not its members for the benefit of society. It has ever to be remembered that, great as may be the efforts made for the prosperity of the body politic, yet the claims of the body politic are nothing in themselves, and become something only in so far as they embody the claims of its component individuals." (Sociology, vol. I, third ed., p. 450.)

Another distinction, equally important, is lost sight

(Continued on page 8.)

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A Plea for Honesty in Terminology.

It is not always safe to apply a given rule to cases superficially similar. J. Wm. Lloyd makes this mistake in justifying the use of the word "duty" in a new sense by the example of the Anarchists in giving new meanings to the words "Anarchism" and "government." One who looks only at the surface will say that Mr. Lloyd is right. But let us look deeper. What are the points of likeness between the instances, and what the points of unlikeness?

One point of likeness is that in all three cases there is danger of more or less confusion. This clearly is an evil, and can only be put up with if at the same time there is a gain in precision of statement—that is, in scientific accuracy—when we are discussing with persons who are willing to heed the definitions which their opponents give to the terms which their opponents use. Can Mr. Lloyd give any reasons for affirming that such a gain is acquired by his new use of the word "duty"? If so, I am ready to listen. Meanwhile I am of the opinion that, instead of a gain, there is a decided loss. In a moment I will explain why. On the other hand, I am sure I do not need to explain to Mr. Lloyd the gain in precision achieved by the new uses of the words "Anarchism" and "government." Already then we have one distinction which tells against Mr. Lloyd's analogy. Now for another.

Worse than any danger of confusion is the taint of cowardice and concealment and hypocrisy which sometimes attaches to a new use of old words. No such taint, but quite the opposite, affects the Anarchistic definitions of "Anarchism" and "government." By their use of the word "Anarchism" the Anarchists give an unpopular and repulsive name (a name which has stood in the public mind for an unpopular and repulsive thing,—disorder) to the philosophy which they offer to the world. Thereby, at the same time that they invite the world to consider, they warn it to beware. This may be honesty carried to a needless extreme, but it is unquestionably honesty. There is no attempt to entice to the acceptance of an idea without thorough examination.

The same honesty, in a reverse sense, appears in the Anarchistic use of the term "government." Here the old use of the term is not denied, but is extended to cover something else. A popular and respected name (government) is given to an unpopular thing (invasion of individuals by individuals) in order to identify it with a popular thing (invasion of individuals by the effective majority) in the hope that unpopularity will thereby attach to both and cause both to be destroyed. It is a striking and very honest way of saying to the world: "See! the criminal is a governor just as the so-called governor is. Each is an invader; each imposes his will by force upon the non-invasive individual. Down with them both!"

Now, there is no such honesty in Mr. Lloyd's use of the term "duty." I do not mean, of course, that there is any dishonesty in Mr. Lloyd's motive; I only claim that the act itself is dishonest in its tendency. It is the giving of a popular name (duty) to an unpopular thing (self-gratification) in the hope (unconscious, no doubt, in Mr. Lloyd) that it may thus be mistaken for a popular thing (altruism) and hastily swallowed as such without examination or comprehension. I class this method of agitation with that of "propaganda by deed." The only difference between them is that, whereas the latter, before the intelligent acceptance of a new idea, attempts to realize it by force, the former strives for this premature realization by a species of fraud, a form of trickery. The result in each case is equally fleeting, equally certain to be followed by reaction.

I think I have overthrown Mr. Lloyd's analogy.

In conclusion, I fulfil my promise to explain why there is a sacrifice of precision in giving the name "duty" to self-gratification. The name and the thing have nothing in common. The community of idea between governing and forcible imposing of one will upon another needs but to be suggested to be seen. Equally apparent is the community of idea between An-archism and liberty. But between duty and self-gratification no community can be detected. One is the antithesis of the other. In identifying them there is no precision save that of expressing an idea in terms of its *precise* opposite. Duty implies obligation; obligation implies duality; duty to self does not imply duality, and is therefore an absurdity.

Let us be rational; let us be honest.

T.

I publish this week as a 64-page pamphlet a work by Zola, which has never before appeared other than serially, even in French. It is entitled "Modern Marriage." The mere announcement is sufficient, I am sure, to awaken the interest of Liberty's readers. The author takes four typical marriages,—one from the nobility, one from the *bourgeoisie*, one from the small shop-keeping class, and one from the working-people,—and shows how each originates, how each is consummated, and how each results. With all the power of his wondrous art Zola exhibits in this story the almost purely commercial character of the marriage institution. The price of the book is fifteen cents, on receipt of which sum it will be mailed post-paid.

"It seems that the clipping from 'Lucifer,' giving some notice of Mr. Van Ornum's book (News-Letter, February 2), embodied a covert allusion to the work of another writer. Had I detected the purport of the offensive words, I would have cut them out. As it is, I regret having, even inadvertently, distressed the gentleman whose sensibilities they have wounded." J. W. Sullivan having made this declaration in the "Twentieth Century," it remains now but for William Holmes to declare in "Lucifer" that, had he detected the purport of the offensive words, he would not have written them. One statement would be as credible as the other.

I am sorry to say that "Instead of a Book" cannot be published till March 15, or perhaps a few days later. It has proved impossible to have the index to the volume in readiness for earlier publication, and I am sure that the subscribers would rather wait than lose this valuable feature, which doubles the usefulness of the work. The fault does not lie with Comrades Tandy and Cohen, of Denver, who have gladly given a great amount of time to this task. But their distance from the scene and a combination of untoward circumstances have led to the delay.

One of Liberty's subscribers desires a set of the numbers of Liberty constituting the fourth volume, in order to complete his file. He prefers a bound volume, especially if it was bound by the publisher of Liberty. If any one has what this subscriber needs, and desires to sell, let him inform me, and I will put him in communication with the would-be purchaser.

"The Rag-Picker of Paris" and "What's To Be Done?" which lately went out of print, can now be had again at fifty cents a copy. If the various persons whose orders for these books I have been obliged to reject will repeat their orders, I will fill them.

A Practice Not Exclusively Athenian.

[Paley's "Greek Wit."]

Antisthenes once ironically advised the Athenians to pass a vote that asses were horses. "Because," said he, "you make men *generals* by a public vote, who have no military qualities."

Problems of Anarchism.

(Continued from page 1.)

of by the Fabian philosophers. I refer to the difference between the needs of a military form of social organization and the industrial type. The former represents a temporary, imperfect, and undesirable stage of social evolution, the latter a permanent, necessary, and wholly desirable condition. The one necessitates a highly centralized, regulating system and great subordination of the individual members, and the degree to which this is carried is the measure of its perfection. Judged by temporary requirements, it becomes the highest type. But the other, the industrial form of organization, which is the ideal type, requires quite the opposite conditions. The industrial regulating system evolves as a separate and independent function from the central or political authority. This kind of society is to be judged by the degree of voluntary interdependence and the freedom from all authority and enforced regulation which its members, both individually and collectively, attain. And, to again quote Spencer's words, "relatively to their ultimate requirements societies become high in proportion to the evolution of their industrial systems, and not in proportion to the evolution of their centralized regulating systems fitting them for carrying on war." (P. 587, *ibid.*)

So that, looking at the social organism from whatever point we choose, we are driven to reject the theory of development which Mr. Webb and all other "Nationalizers" attempt to weave around social evolution. It were much better for these good folk to give up all attempts to establish in the name of evolution the fallacies for which they claim scientific truth.

WM. BAILIE.

Mazzini: Duties of Man.

Mazzini's address to workingmen (*Duties of Man*: Funk & Wagnalls Co.) has been reprinted for the edification of the workingman of the present.

It is a book often eloquent in style, with occasional true and vigorous thoughts curiously confused with the lame logic and absurdities of theology. Not that Mazzini's theology, considered as such, is of the worst. Indeed, he appears to have evolved enough to be classed as a Unitarian of large and liberal type.

But his tone is that of a father to children; of a priest to his flock. This is significant. The book is paternalistic.

It is perhaps fortunate that the book falls into my hands for review, for, as I am old-fashioned enough to believe that the terminology of morality is not necessarily out of date, I shall not quarrel with its title. Not that I differ materially, or at all, perhaps, with the basic thought of my fellow-egoists, but I am convinced that the terms rights and duties, good and evil, moral and immoral, represent facts in the life of man, facts always existent and enduring, which must be expressed in some form; and the vocabulary of morality appears (with an occasional slight explanation) convenient, and as good as any to express the most advanced views of these facts. If we use the terms rights and duties in an egoistic sense, we are no more liable to general misapprehension than when we use the terms Anarchism and government in an Anarchistic sense. Every new philosophy uses old terms in a new sense, without confusion.

I, as an Anarchistic-Egoist, then, admit that men have duties one toward the other, but not exactly as this author thinks.

On page 72 he says: "To develop yourselves, to act and live according to your Law of life, is your first, or rather your sole duty." Had he admitted what he elsewhere takes pains to deny, — that the law of life is the pursuit of individual benefit, — I should be in absolute accord with this. I believe in one supreme duty to self, and that all other duties proceed from and are tested by self-benefit.

This assertion of Self-Duty was one of Mazzini's true thoughts, but strangely contradictory of almost everything else in his book. His real faith was that God ruled, and that man's duty was to obey him without thought of self-interest. It is but justice, however, to say that he believed his God to *be* good and his rulings *for* man's interest.

In interpreting the Divine commands he was at a disadvantage compared with other theologians, for he had rejected the Popes and Bibles (page 35), and therefore had no direct code to turn to. In this dilemma how found he the Divine will? By questioning the individual conscience? No, for he admits (page 35) that the individual conscience is too variable to be reliable. By the *Vox populi*? No, for on the same page he admits that almost all progress is due to the revolt of individuals against this Voice. How then?

The reader will hardly believe it, but it was by combining these two confessed lies that he found the One Truth; these two worthless guides, when they agreed, pointed him the right road.

"*Whenever the consent of Humanity corresponds with the teachings of your own conscience, you are certain of the Truth.*"

Can absurdity exceed? This is on page 43. Turn back eight pages and read: "Suffice it to say that all the great ideas that have contributed to the progress of Humanity hitherto were, at their commencement, in *opposition* to the belief then accepted by Humanity, and were preached by *individuals* whom Humanity derided, persecuted, and crucified." The italics are his.

Mazzini knew that the general consent of Humanity, as proved by its acts, had always been, and still is, that the strong should despoil the weak, and that the conscience of the average capitalist of today ratifies that decision in good faith; yet, because *his* conscience spoke differently, he educed Altruism as the Law of God.

A true priest, he unhesitatingly proclaimed his enthusiasms as the utterances of his God.

Where we perceive glaring ill-logic in a man's thought in one place, we may confidently look for it elsewhere. Mazzini tells us that he is not bound to prove that God exists, — "the attempt would seem blasphemous"; but in the next sentence he blasphemes by declaring that "God exists because we exist."

The witness is unfortunate, for if any thing could morally prove God not to exist, it is the existence, as it is and has been, of man. What is the concept? God is a Czar. But a good Czar, absolute in love, willing man's happiness and perfection; absolute in power to satisfy that love, to execute that will. What are the facts? Man's existence has always been a battle with misery, a struggle for life with the certainty of final defeat, distorted and stained through and through by evil. Cannot God help this? Then he is not God. Will not God help this? Then he is not God. Man's existence disproves God's. Any the least jar, discord, imperfection in the universe disproves God, for a perfect God is perfect in his works, and an imperfect God is not a God.

Mazzini denies happiness as the end and affirms virtue. He is one of those absurd moralists who say in effect: It is not for your interest to do right, nevertheless you must do right! — because? — well, yes, if you must have a reason, because it is for your *interest* to do right.

They deny utility, but, if you hunt them from cover to cover, they have nothing to offer but utility at last.

Mazzini underrates Rights and Liberty. In their name all the recent great revolutions have been accomplished, he admits (he admits, in fact, too much when he says: "Those revolutions achieved Liberty-individual, liberty of education, liberty of belief, liberty of commerce, liberty in all things and for all men." Had such liberty really been conquered, we Anarchists would have had no contention, for we exist because government denies them all), but still the condition of the workingman has not improved, he thinks.

Liberty being of little or no use, he preaches Duty. He forgets that duty to God and the neighbor has been urged since Christ's time, at least, and yet during all that time none of those things were secured to the workingman which he admits a brief agitation of Rights and Liberty secured. He does not comprehend that all that has been accomplished for liberty is but a foundation which must be solidly completed before any of the superstructure of the new society can be erected. Regarding Liberty as secured, and seeing the workingman still unhappy, he of course deems Liberty a failure. This is the great fallacy of his book.

To the Anarchistic utilitarian, *rights* and *duties* are but expressions of *needs*. I need happiness, therefore happiness is my right; I need liberty as a means to happiness, therefore have a right to be free; I am obliged to coöperate with my fellows to secure liberty, therefore it is my *duty* to harmoniously associate. That is all. The fountain of all rights and duties is self.

But Mazzini puts it differently:

"This principle is Duty. We must convince men that they are all sons of one sole God, and bound to fulfill and execute one sole law here on earth; that each of them is bound to live, not for himself, but for others; that the aim of existence is not to be more or less happy, but to make ourselves and others more virtuous."

On page 87 I find: "How could you call yourselves free in the presence of men possessing the power to command you without your consent? The Republic is, then, the only logical and truly legitimate form of Government. You have no master save God in heaven, and the People on earth."

This would be astonishing were it not, today, even, repeated on every side around us. Men see that monarchs govern without their consent, but they cannot see that majority-rule sets men over them, who rule in just as positive a manner without their consent. Names make such a difference that one clearly sees how the old German woman was enabled to distinguish her resembling twins by christening one Max and the other Rudolph.

On page 106 he denies the right of secret association.

On page 101 he looks forward to a time when the people "may ask — nay, exact — the foundation of a system of gratuitous National Education, *obligatory upon all.*"

Nevertheless, in spite of blows direct or indirect at liberty, in spite of errors fundamental and incidental, there are some true and beautiful sayings in the book. I have already given one of these; here are others:

"There is no true association except among equals."

"Woman is the caress of existence."

"Without liberty there is no true society, because association between free men and slaves is impossible; there can only exist the rule of the one over the others."

"Liberty is but a means."

"Among the essential elements of human life . . . Property is one."

In the chapter on the economical question his criticism of Communism is keen and good, and the remedy he finally proposes for the ills of the workingmen, their voluntary association in coöperative groups, with perfect liberty of withdrawal, for the purpose of retaining capital and labor in their own hands, is in many respects one of our own ideas, and, had he not added the State and super-added God, would have left little to find fault with.

In brief, then, this book is hopelessly out of date. Four of its pages would contain all that it has to say of value to the modern workman, and that, even, has been better said elsewhere. Why has it been reprinted?

J. WM. LLOYD.

Comrade Most on Comrade Merlino.

[Freiheit.]

As long as we cannot succeed in converting four or five English-speaking native workingmen in every large city of the country to the cause of Anarchy, it is absurd to issue English newspapers. Just think! An Italian is imported from England that he may publish an English newspaper here in America — that is read (?) only by German and Jewish comrades. Such undertakings are mere child's play. Every cent that is devoted to them is thrown out of the window. The German comrades are to be virtually roped into endangering our own undertakings to vitalize such fantastic visionary schemes. Because we could not yield to such demands we have been attacked and maligned and denounced in the most shameful manner.

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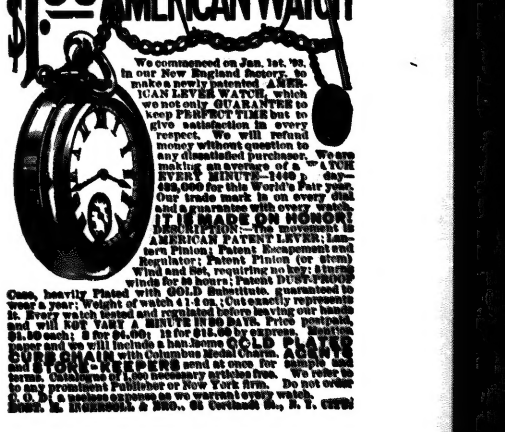
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